NOVEMBER 2001

TRANSREPORT

TRANSPORTATION NEWS FROM THE BOSTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Update to the Boston MPO Regional Transportation Plan Underway

In January of this year the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization adopted its Transportation Plan for 2000–2025 with the understanding that the MPO would:

- Refine the Plan's policies, including alternative land use policies.
- Continue to conduct public outreach, and expand it in relation to minority and low-income communities.
- Reassess what projects should be included in the Plan, based on the policies, public comments, and environmental justice measures.

PLAN UPDATE 2001

Plan Update 2001 Workshops

See page 4 for workshop locations

Framingham Monday, November 5, 6:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. – Cosponsored by the MetroWest Growth Management Committee Transportation Task Force.

Braintree Thursday, November 8, 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. – Cosponsored by: Representative Joseph Sullivan, Chairman, Joint Committee on Transportation; the Braintree Planning Board; and the South Shore Chamber of Commerce.

Everett Tuesday, November 13, 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. – Cosponsored by the City of Everett and the Mystic View Task Force.

Newton Thursday, November 15, 6:00 P.M. to 7:30 P.M. – Cosponsored by the City of Newton.

Salem Tuesday, November 27, 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. – Cosponsored by the Salem Point Neighborhood Association, Salem Point Main Street, and the Salem Harbor Community Development Corporation.

Roxbury Thursday, November 29, 6:00 P.M. to 7:30 P.M.

The MPO is in the process of meeting these commitments. When they have been completed, the results will be reflected in an updated Plan to be produced in the spring.

The purpose of the Transportation Plan is to establish the MPO's transportation policies, assess the region's transportation system, forecast the region's future transportation needs, and lay out a program for preserving and expanding the system over the next 25 years within the context of MPO policies and anticipated resources.

Since adoption of the Plan in January, the MPO has refined a set of policies to be used for project selection. MPO staff tested two preliminary sets of projects using the regional transportation model, which is a planning tool that can be used to evaluate the impacts of transportation alternatives given varying assumptions with regard to population, employment, and land use. These tests were conducted in order to assemble data that will be useful in making final project selections, which will occur after all public comments have been received and evaluated.

One of the two project sets is based on the assumption of funding being segregated by mode (highway funds to highway projects and transit funds to transit projects). The other set assumes an emphasis on transit projects, which could be made possible by the "flexing" of highway funds.

Both project sets were tested using two land use scenarios: "Trends Extended" and "Targeted Growth." The "Trends Extended" scenario assumes that development will continue in a similar pattern to that which has occurred over previous decades. The "Targeted Growth" scenario focuses growth to denser areas with available water, sewer, and transit infrastructure.

MPO staff have continued to meet with the Environmental Justice Ad Hoc Committee to examine the project sets and land use scenarios in light of the definition of environmental justice that the MPO adopted last June. The definition places a general requirement on the MPO in its transportation work to:

- Examine the allocation of benefits and burdens, currently and in the planned future.

■ Public Outreach *cont. on p. 3*

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The members of the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO): Executive Office of Transportation and Construction • City of Boston • City of Everett • City of Newton • City of Peabody • Federal Highway Administration • Federal Transit Administration • Joint Regional Transportation Committee • Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority • Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Advisory Board • Massachusetts Highway Department • Massachusetts Port Authority • Massachusetts Turnpike Authority • Metropolitan Area Planning Council • Town of Bedford • Town of Framingham • Town of Hopkinton

Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization Activities

Sub-Signatory Committee Action Items

At a meeting held on October 11, the Boston MPO Sub-Signatory Committee approved a report prepared by the Central Transportation Staff for MassHighway entitled *Speeds and Travel Times on Limited-Access Highways in the Boston Metropolitan Region: 1999–2000*. The report presents typical speeds and travel times, by half-hour increment, during the AM and PM peak periods, on seventeen sections of highway in the region. The data are based on more than 1,800 travel time runs performed in the spring and fall months of 1999 and 2000.

Also at that meeting the SSC gave approval for CTPS to begin work on the 2003 Congestion Management System. The CMS is an ongoing program designed to locate mobility concerns within the MPO region and demonstrate alternative improvements and strategies that can be used by decision-makers in project planning, prioritizing, and programming in the Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program, and the Unified Planning Work Program. This $860,000 project will monitor changes on roadways, in transit, and at park-and-ride lots since the last CMS report; evaluate the success of implemented projects and strategies recommended in previous reports; and, for the first time, include bicycle and pedestrian monitoring. As in previous years, the program will include ample opportunity for input from the public. The work effort is expected to take approximately two and a half years to complete.

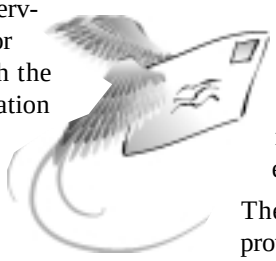
JRTC Update

Congratulations to Marcy Crowley of Wayland on her election as JRTC chair at the October meeting. Ms. Crowley has impeccable credentials as an activist in transportation planning. She has been a long-term member not only of the JRTC, but also of the MBTA Advisory Board and the Mass Municipal Association, as well as having had a 24-year tenure as a selectman. Richard Canale of Lexington, representing the Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC), was elected vice chair.

After acknowledging Bill Deignan for his able leadership during an extremely busy year, the JRTC turned its attention to the 2001 Transportation Plan update. Member Nick Rubino chairs the JRTC subcommittee responsible for detailed review and discussion of the Plan. The JRTC will continue discussion of the Plan at its November meeting. Mr. Rubino is also facilitating additional involvement in Plan development by coordinating the November 8 luncheon seminar on the Plan with the Transportation Group of the Boston Society of Civil Engineers Section; see page 4 for details.

Get Meeting News Faster

As part of its ongoing public participation program, the Boston MPO will be adding an e-mail notification service to its mechanisms for reaching the public with the most up-to-date information possible.



One feature of this service, which will soon be available to all who wish to subscribe to it, will be the e-mailing of meeting notices, of agendas and meeting handouts when available, and of changes to the MPO's monthly meeting calendar if they occur. More features will be added to this service depending on what subscribers are interested in receiving. It should be noted that *TRANSREPORT* subscribers who enroll in this service will continue to receive their newsletter via their current delivery method, whether that is U.S mail or e-mail.

The next issue of *TRANSREPORT* will provide more details on the new service, including how to subscribe. In the meantime, if you have ideas on additional features you would like to see included, let us know by e-mail at publicinformation@ctps.org.

Successful PMT Outreach Program Continues

Ideas for capital improvements to MBTA services are coming in as members of the public participate in the workshops and community meetings for the MBTA's Program for Mass Transportation. The PMT is the MBTA's long-range "vision document," which identifies and prioritizes investments for the upcoming 25 years. The new PMT, when completed, will replace one that was produced in 1994. The process is now in its outreach phase, in which the MBTA is actively soliciting ideas to help define the future of transit and the transportation infrastructure needed to support it.

MBTA project manager Stephen Woelfel reports that hundreds of ideas have been submitted during this phase. "We are very pleased with the number and quality of ideas that have come in to date. Some of the suggestions have been made in the past, but many are brand-new and very thoughtful," Woelfel said. Ideas have been sought from planning agencies, neighborhood groups, regional interest groups, legislators, municipalities, transit customers, and interested citizens.

All residents of eastern Massachusetts are invited to submit ideas and comments. The MBTA will be actively looking for input through November. Comments and ideas may be submitted either at a workshop; by mail to CTPS, Attn: PMT, Suite 2150, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116; or by e-mail at publicinformation@ctps.org.

As reported in last month's *TRANSREPORT*, the MBTA has formed a PMT Working Committee made up of representatives from state agencies, municipal officials, and community activists. To date, the Working Committee has been discussing the PMT's vision statement, goals and objectives, and project evaluation criteria, and has been studying

■ PMT Update *cont. on p. 4*

Artery Oversight Committee Meeting Focuses on Transit Commitments

The Central Artery Environmental Oversight Committee dedicated its October 16 meeting to the discussion of public transportation projects that are Central Artery project environmental commitments. At this meeting, held in downtown Boston, representatives of the Executive Office of Transportation and Construction, Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, Massachusetts Turnpike Authority (MTA), Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, and Department of Environmental Protection were on hand to provide updates and answer questions on the status of various projects.

The MBTA provided schedule information for both Blue Line station and Orange Line improvements. Aquarium Station on the Blue Line, which has been closed since October 2000, will reopen on October 29. The station will only be accessible from a new headhouse located on the other side of the Central Artery from the old station entrance. Further work on the station will be done; the old entrance will reopen when the project is complete. All stations on the Blue Line will be able to accommodate six-car trains by 2004, although modernization work at Maverick and Orient Heights stations may not be completed until 2008.

The MBTA will purchase 24 new Blue Line cars by 2004, allowing three six-car trainsets to be shifted from the Blue Line to the Orange Line. MBTA officials explained that, although purchasing new trains for the Orange Line and providing a larger fleet were originally the priority steps for increasing capacity on that line, the priority is now modernization of the line's signal system, because more trains can not be operated with the current system. Representatives from the MBTA also discussed the work of the stakeholders' group for Silver Line transit service and the status of park-and-ride commitments.

A representative of the Turnpike Authority briefed meeting attendees on the agency's work to meet environmental commitments on park-and-ride facilities. Of the committed spaces, 718 are done, 150 are under construction, and 1,600 remain to be built. Attendees offered suggestions on how to increase use of the lots, including an improved marketing campaign and additional transit options at the lots.

The Department of Environmental Protection is in the process of hiring a consultant to review the two Arborway studies submitted by the MBTA to DEP in the spring of this year. Once a consultant begins work, the tentative schedule calls for a draft report for public review within one month, a draft DEP decision for public review within two months, and a final DEP decision within three months.

The next meeting of the Central Artery Environmental Oversight Committee will feature a presentation on open space by Michael Lewis, MTA/CA/T Project Director. It will be held on Tuesday, November 13, at Hale and Dorr, 60 State Street, 26th floor, Boston. Please note that a photo ID is required to access 60 State Street.

For more information on the Central Artery EOC, contact Anne Fanton, EOC executive director, at (617) 720-1150 or afanton@earthlink.net.

■ Public Outreach *cont. from p. 1*

- Ensure that minority and low-income communities are treated equitably in the provision of transportation services and projects.
- Provide full participation for minority and low-income communities to advise the MPO during its planning and decision-making process.

The definition further states that the examination of environmental justice will include consideration of patterns of capital investment and allocation that have contributed to present conditions and will inform current and future MPO decisions.

Further public outreach for the Plan update includes a series of workshops to be held at locations throughout the region during November. The workshops will be conducted in an open-house format that will provide members of the public an opportunity to drop in at their convenience and meet with project staff. This informal style is expected to generate more discussion than the traditional public meeting format about the transportation needs of the region and more ideas from the public on how to meet the identified needs.

To set the stage for discussion prior to attending a workshop, members of the public may download the draft policies and project sets from the Boston MPO Web site at www.ctps.org/bostonmpo/plan2000/plan, or they may request that a copy be mailed to them by contacting Anne McGahan at (617) 973-7100. Anyone who is unable to attend a workshop may submit questions or comments by e-mailing to publicinformation@ctps.org or by contacting Ms. McGahan at the above number.

MPO staff will also conduct public outreach through the Joint Regional Transportation Committee, the MPO's public advisory body, and through the Metropolitan Area Planning Council subregional groups.

When the outreach process is complete, comments and suggestions generated from it will be used to prepare a draft Transportation Plan update. This document will be circulated for a 35-day public review prior to MPO endorsement and submittal to the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration.

Meeting Calendar

The public is welcome to attend the following transportation-related meetings this month. A photo ID is usually required for access to meeting locations.

At the State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston

Thursday, November 1
- MBTA Board of Directors — 1:00 P.M.
  CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150

Monday, November 5
- Boston MPO Sub-Signatory Committee Transportation Plan Work Session — 10:00 A.M.
  CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150

Wednesday, November 14
- Joint Regional Transportation Committee (JRTC) — 3:00–5:00 P.M.
  Conference Room 2/3

Thursday, November 15 (tentative)
- Boston MPO Sub-Signatory Committee — 10:00 A.M.
  CTPS Conference Room, Suite 2150

Tuesday, November 20
- Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA (AACT) — 1:30–3:30 P.M.
  Conference Room 2/3

At Other Boston-Area Locations

Thursday, November 1
- Program for Mass Transportation, MBTA: Boston-Area Drop-in Workshop — 6:00–8:00 P.M.
  Presentation at beginning of workshop
  Boston Public Library – Dudley Branch
  65 Warren Street, Boston

Monday, November 5

Three meetings at Framingham Town Hall, Memorial Building, Conference Room 2, 150 Concord Street, Framingham:
- MetroWest Growth Management Committee Transportation Task Force — 4:00–6:00 P.M.
- 2001 Transportation Plan Update: Drop-in Workshop* — 6:00–7:00 P.M.
- MetroWest Roadway Evaluation for Bicycle Travel — 7:00–8:00 P.M.

Wednesday, November 7
- Program for Mass Transportation, MBTA: South Side–Area Drop-in Workshop — 4:00–7:00 P.M.
  Presentation at beginning of workshop
  Federal Reserve Building
  New England Room
  600 Atlantic Avenue, Boston

Thursday, November 8
- Boston Society of Civil Engineers Section Luncheon: The Boston MPO, the 2001 Transportation Plan Update and the Transportation Improvement Program — 11:30 A.M.–1:30 P.M.
  Cost $10–$45. Registration required. Contact Sarah Kirk at (617) 345-9020 or skirk@haslaw.com for further information.
- 2001 Transportation Plan Update: Drop-in Workshop* — 6:00–8:00 P.M.
  Braintree Town Hall Auditorium
  1 JFK Memorial Drive, Braintree

Tuesday, November 13
- 2001 Transportation Plan Update: Drop-in Workshop* — 6:00–8:00 P.M.
  Everett City Hall
  George Keverian Room, 3rd Floor
  484 Broadway, Everett

Thursday, November 15
- 2001 Transportation Plan Update: Drop-in Workshop* — 6:00–7:30 P.M.
  Newton City Hall, Room 202
  1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton

Tuesday, November 27
- 2001 Transportation Plan Update: Drop-in Workshop* — 6:00–8:00 P.M.
  Neighbor-to-Neighbor Office
  100 Congress Street, Salem

Thursday, November 29
- 2001 Transportation Plan Update: Drop-in Workshop* — 6:00–8:00 P.M.
  Boston Public Library – Dudley Branch
  65 Warren Street, Boston

**Directions available on Boston MPO Web site, at www.ctps.org/bostonmpo/plan2000/plan.*

Meeting dates and times are subject to change: please call (617) 973-7119 for confirmation. Additional transportation meetings open to the public are listed on the Boston MPO Web site, at www.ctps.org/bostonmpo/involved/meetings.

■ PMT Update *cont. from p. 2*

details of the MBTA's capital planning process and financing. Working Committee meetings in the future will focus on, among other things, the project development process and the first draft of the set of potential projects to be included in the PMT.

The MPO Web site, www.ctps.org, provides more detailed information on the PMT, related reports and documents, and notices of upcoming meetings and workshops.

TRANSreport

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